

## Article

# Evidential Adverbs and Polarity: A Study from Spanish

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**Abstract:** This paper addresses the analysis of variations in structures that are projected in discourse. Starting with the relationship between evidential adverbs and the affirmative Spanish adverb *sí*, I review the occurrence of the conjunction *que* “that” with evidential adverbs, such as *naturalmente* “naturally”, *ciertamente* “certainly”, *obviamente* “obviously”, and *evidentemente* “evidently” as a Hispanic phenomenon, as well as its value and development in different varieties of Spanish. Although it appears that Latin American Spanish varieties lack an overt *que* in certain situations, such as *sí que* contexts or recomplementation, studies of the construction with evidential adverbs in language varieties different from European Spanish remain limited. I use examples extracted from CREA and CORPES XXI. My main objectives are to review the presence of the construction with evidential adverb + *que* (“that”) in Spanish by paying particular attention to its distribution in Latin American countries and to study the basic uses of the construction in countries in which it is documented.

**Keywords:** evidential adverbs; emphatic polarity; conjunction *que*; Latin American Spanish; European Spanish

## 1. Introduction

Section 30.11.r of *Nueva gramática de la lengua española* (RAE/ASALE 2009) mentions that certain adverbs and adverbial expressions, such as *naturalmente*, *desde luego*, *sin duda*, and the adverb *sí*, can form constructions in Spanish together with the conjunction *que* (“that”); specifically, it states that “they can affect substantive subordinates” (RAE/ASALE 2009, p. 2354). Section 32.8.f adds that some interjections, such as *mira*, *vaya*, and *cuidado*, also allow substantive subordinates headed by *que* “with a meaning close to that of *desde luego que*” (RAE/ASALE 2009, p. 2522):

1. a. *Obviamente* *que* no lo volveré a hacer.  
Obviously that not CLACU return-FUT to do  
‘Obviously I will not do it again’.
- b. *Sí que* iré con vosotros.  
Yes that go-FUT with us  
‘I really will go with you’.
- c. *Vaya* *que* lo sabía.  
Interjection that CLACU know  
‘Boy, did I know that’.
- d. *Desde luego que* estaré con vosotros.  
Certainly that be-FUT with us  
‘I’ll certainly be with you’.

In various Romance languages, such as Spanish (Villa-García and González Rodríguez 2020a), Italian (Poletto and Zanuttini 2013; Cruschina 2015; Cruschina and Remberger 2017a, 2017b) or Romanian (Hill 2007), the so-called evidential adverbs (*naturalmente*, *ciertamente*, *obviamente*, and so on), as well as the polarity adverbs (*sí* and *no*), can be followed by the conjunction *que* in constructions, as in *naturalmente que* and *sí que*. Although the study



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of constructions with *que* has been the subject of much interest within the framework of extended functional sentence structure in recent years (Rodríguez Ramalle 2008; Poletto and Zanuttini 2013; Villa-García and González Rodríguez 2020a, 2020b), research has not always been conducted on the basis of a comparative model within the same dialectal variety.

According to Rodríguez Molina (2014), the appearance of the conjunction *que* after the affirmative adverb would indeed have been part of the last step in the evolution and development of this adverb prior to it becoming an operator of emphatic affirmation in Spanish, as it is at present. However, the extension of the conjunction has not been completed in all dialectal areas. Villa-García and González Rodríguez (2020b) took a step further in the analysis of the *sí que* structure by including dialectal variations and pointed out that this structure was not documented in all areas in which Latin American Spanish is spoken. Thus, it would appear that the process of the extension of the structure with the conjunction *que* is not a fully developed phenomenon in all the varieties of Spanish that are spoken in the Americas.

Research on the study of variation phenomena in adverbs has especially focused on non-agreement adjectives, also called adverbial adjectives (Bartra and Suñer 1997; Hummel 2015, 2017; Di Tullio and Suñer 2011; Suñer and Di Tullio 2014; Suñer 2017; among others). Variations in adverbs have also focused on adverbial agreement (Feliú 2018; Pato and Casanova 2017; Feliú and Pato 2019; Pato 2020). As far as the study of emphasis and polarity is concerned, it is worth mentioning the analysis developed by Camus (2012) on the interpretation of *ya* “already” in Basque Country or the paper by Palacios and García Tesoro (2014) related to *ya* in Peru. With regard to the uses of the conjunction *que* “that” in contexts that are not dependent on a main verb, the investigations of Gras and Sansiñena (2017, 2020) and Pérez Fernández et al. (2022) from the perspective of in subordinate constructions and the works developed by Corr (2018, 2022) from the functional structure of the left periphery should be mentioned. With regard to evidentiality, Olbertz (2007), Demonte and Fernández-Soriano (2020, 2022), De la Mora and Maldonado (2015), Saito (2019, 2021), Martínez Vera (2019, 2023), and Sanromán Vilas (2020) analyze the interpretation and variation of *dizque* “to say that” and, especially in Demonte and Fernández-Soriano’s (2013a, 2013b, 2014) papers, the reportative meaning of conjunction *que* in independent context. Finally, it is worth highlighting the previously mentioned study by Villa-García and González Rodríguez (2020a, 2020b), which investigated dialectal microvariations across the Spanish-speaking world in terms of the presence or absence of the conjunction *que* “that” with the affirmative adverb *sí* “yes” in *sí que* contexts; according to Villa-García and González Rodríguez, the function is to signal the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the proposition.

This paper presents an analysis of variation in structures that are projected in discourse. Starting with the relationship between evidential adverbs and the affirmative adverb *sí*, I review the presence of the conjunction *que* “that” with evidential adverbs, such as *naturalmente* “naturally”, *ciertamente* “certainly”, and *obviamente* “obviously” as a Hispanic phenomenon, as well as its value and development in different varieties of Spanish. Although it appears that Latin American Spanish varieties lack an overt *que* in certain situations, such as *sí que* contexts or recomplementation, as pointed out by Villa-García and González Rodríguez (2020b), studies on the construction with evidential adverbs in language varieties that are different from European Spanish remain limited. The specific objectives of this study are twofold:

- (a) To review evidential adverb–*que* contexts in the Spanish-speaking world by paying particular attention to the distribution in Latin American countries;
- (b) To examine the basic uses of the analyzed construction in the countries in which it is documented.

To accomplish these objectives, I have included part of that discursive context in some examples since it is interesting to know whether the sentence introduced by the conjunction is part of the previous discourse.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, I explain the methodology. In Section 3, I present the theoretical and descriptive background that serves as the justification and support for this study. To carry this out, I review studies that have examined the constructions *sí que* and *bien que* (Section 3.1) and then review the behavior of evidential adverbs and the appearance of the conjunction *que* (Section 3.2). In Section 4, I include the dialectal perspective, beginning with a review of studies that have attempted to explain the variation in the construction *sí que* versus *sí* in Spanish (Section 4.1). I then discuss evidential adverbs and their distribution in the dialectal varieties of Spanish, first by reviewing the different contexts in which they occur (Section 4.2) and then by conducting a comparative study of the contrast between evidential adverbs with or without *que* in certain dialectal varieties in specific discursive contexts (Section 4.3). Section 5 is devoted to discussion. Finally, Section 6 presents the conclusions drawn from the study. I end with a bibliography of works cited.

## 2. Data and Methodology

The data used were taken from the Hispanic domain from CREA and CORPES XXI. In Sections 4.1 and 4.2, when reviewing the different contexts in which evidential adverbs followed by *que* occur, data were selected mainly from varieties that documented the presence of *que*: Argentina, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru, Spain, and Venezuela. However, in Section 3, I use examples from other areas. The analysis in Section 4 focuses on the countries mentioned above.

According to the contexts previously described, in Section 4.3, I consider examples from a question-and-answer environment. As I did not find sufficient data without *que* in the question-and-answer environment, specifically *yes/no* question environments in countries such as Chile and Mexico, I offer examples in monological contexts. In addition, it was necessary to resort to oral data, in which references to prior knowledge of the discursive situation and the emphasis on uncontrolled conversational contexts could serve as support for the projection of the conjunction.

As for the type of evidential adverb on which I searched for data, these were mostly as follows: *naturalmente* “naturally”, *ciertamente* “certainly”, *obviamente* “obviously”, and *evidentemente* “evidently”. These were the most documented, with some variations that I take into account in Section 4.3.

Although this is not a quantitative study, before reviewing the examples identified, some data related to our corpus are worth noting.

In CORPES XXI, a corpus that includes texts produced between 2001 and 2016, the forms produced in classified texts from Spain accounted for slightly more than 30%, while those from America exceeded 217 million forms, approximately 70%. In the case of the study of evidential adverbs in CORPES XXI, it is clear that there were more examples of adverbs from Spain and certain American countries, such as Chile and Mexico.

The documents from CREA and CORPES XXI indicate that the evidential adverb followed by *que* is used in Latin American Spanish. However, according to the data provided mainly by CORPES XXI, examples of evidential adverbs with *que* are not equally documented in all varieties of Spanish.<sup>1</sup>

If we look at *naturalmente que*, we find that in Argentina, out of 752 occurrences of *naturalmente*, only 4 were accompanied by the conjunction *que*. On the other hand, Chile, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, and Spain showed a higher number of occurrences of *naturalmente* followed by the conjunction: Chile, with 320 occurrences and 11 examples with *que*; the Dominican Republic, with 100 occurrences and 8 with *que*; Mexico, with 470 occurrences and 12 with *que*; Peru, with 261 occurrences and 18 examples with *que*; Venezuela, with 141 examples and 6 with the conjunction; and Spain, with more than 3000 occurrences of *naturalmente* and 116 examples with *que*.

As for *ciertamente*, there are countries in which the presence of *que* is testimonial, such as in Argentina, where out of 316 occurrences of this adverb, only 1 was followed by *que*. As for Chile, Dominican Republic Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, the data with the

projection of *que* were as follows: Chile, 331 examples of the adverb and 15 data with *que*; the Dominican Republic, 161 occurrences and 5 with *que*; Mexico, 680 occurrences and 11 examples with *que*; Peru, 259 occurrences of *ciertamente* and 17 examples with *que*; and Venezuela, 405 examples and 10 with the conjunction. In Spain, there were more examples of *ciertamente* (more than 2000) and, consequently, more occurrences of the adverb with *que* than in other countries (24 examples).

The evidential adverb *obviamente* is preferred over *naturalmente* and *ciertamente* in Argentina (902 occurrences and 33 examples with *que*) and Chile (716 occurrences and 45 with the conjunction). However, *obviamente que* does not have a prominent use in all countries. It is striking that there is a greater preference for *naturalmente que* versus *obviamente que* in Spain: 2308 examples of *obviamente* and 12 with *que*. In the Dominican Republic, there were 85 examples with *obviamente* and 2 examples with *que*. As for other countries, Mexico documented 852 examples of this adverb and 21 examples with the conjunction; Peru had 295 occurrences and 31 examples with *que*; and Venezuela had 336 examples and 9 with the conjunction.

As far as *evidentemente* is concerned, Argentina documented 640 occurrences and 6 uses of the conjunction; Chile documented 474 occurrences and 18 with *que*; and the Dominican Republic documented 87 occurrences and 1 case of the conjunction; Mexico documented 360 occurrences and 6 examples with the conjunction; Peru documented 215 occurrences of *evidentemente*, and there were no examples with *que*; Venezuela documented 196 occurrences and 5 examples with *que*; and Spain documented more than 3000 occurrences, but the conjunction appeared only in 7 examples.

The quantitative data show that the presence of the conjunction after evidential adverbs is documented in the analyzed countries. In addition, according to the number of occurrences, it is possible to say that the projection of the conjunction with evidential adverbs is not a phenomenon exclusive to European Spanish. On the other hand, these data indicate that the construction with *que* can be studied in the analyzed countries since the corpora provide us with sufficient data.

In Section 4, I carry out a qualitative study of the data, paying attention to the different contexts in which the construction appears, as I explained at the beginning of this section.

### 3. Background and Related Work: Adverbs with *que*

#### 3.1. The Case of *sí que* and *bien que*

The polarity adverb *sí* is not equivalent to the negation adverb *no*. While the projection of the negative adverb serves to negate a sentence, the projection of the corresponding affirmative adverb does not imply affirmation since this is achieved without any markings: The affirmative polarity adverb has an emphatic character when projected. In studies based on the functional structure of the sentence (Hernanz 2006; Batllori and Hernanz 2009; Rodríguez Molina 2014), the adverb is linked to two functional heads, that is, to the polarity and to a functional head that is related to the expression of the emphatic focus.

The presence of the conjunction *que* after the adverb allows for the development of values that have not been documented in the use of the adverb *sí*. There are highly relevant studies in the literature on the subject. For example, Etxepare (1997) noted that a sentence such as *Sí que ha venido* ('Yes s/he has come'), as opposed to the corresponding *sin que*, had an emphatic interpretation: It "is felicitously uttered only if there is a previous assertion putting into question or denying that a given person is coming" (Etxepare 1997, p. 125). In the example *Sí que ha venido*, the communicative import of the sequence *sí que* consists of claiming that the relevant person has indeed come; it is an emphatic affirmation intended to eliminate the opposite option. What is relevant here is that *sí que* serves to emphasize the truth value of the proposition, as can be seen in the following examples:

2. a. La asociación también tiene grupos de paloteo ¿No le gustaría bailar paloteo?  
 'The association also has paloteo groups. Wouldn't you like to dance paloteo?'  
 -Sí que me gusta,  
 Yes that CLDAT like  
 pero una de las normas de la asociación es que no se puede pertenecer a dos grupos  
 diferentes de danzas  
 'Yes, I would like to, but one of the rules of the association is that you cannot  
 belong to two different dance groups'  
 (CREA, El Norte de Castilla, 19/06/2001, Spain)
- b. -¿Está usted de visita por aquí o tiene algún pariente en el pueblo?  
 -'Are you visiting here or do you have any relatives in town?'  
 -Pues ya que lo dice, sí que tenía un pariente,  
 ... yes that I-have a relative  
 señora, pero debe de haberse ido.  
 -'Well, since you say so, I did have a relative, ma'am, but he must have left.'
- c. -No estoy cansada.  
 -'I'm not tired'.  
 -Sí que lo estás. No hay más que verte.  
 Yes that CLACU you-are  
 -'Yes, you are. Just look at you'.

The sentence with *sí que* emphasizes the affirmative assertion in the examples mentioned above in contrast to the opposite option. The speaker expresses his/her commitment to the propositional content because *sí que* has scope over the entire proposition. According to this idea, what *sí que* does is extend the focus over the main assertion of the sentence (Villa-García and González Rodríguez 2020a), thus giving rise to "an interpretation where the truth value of the sentence is stressed" (Batllori and Hernanz 2013, p. 27).

This also occurs in other constructions with *que*, as analyzed in detail by Hernanz (2006, 2007) and Batllori and Hernanz (2009, 2013). Spanish displays sentences in which the emphatic affirmative adverb *bien* can be followed by the conjunction *que*:

3. a. "He aprendido el valseo y las habaneras. ¡Vaya!...  
 (I) have learned the valseo and the habaneras. Go!  
 ¡Y bien que me gustan!"  
 And well that CLDAT please  
 And I do indeed like them!
- b. A. ¿Por qué te has enfadado tanto?  
 'Why did you get so angry?'  
 B. ¿ Y tú me lo preguntas?  
 And you CLDAT CLACC ask?  
 Pues bien que lo sabes!  
 So well that (you) CLACC know  
 'Are you really asking me? You know very well why!'  
 (Hernanz 2006, p. 122).

Similarly to what happens with the *sí que* construction, sentences headed by *bien que* focus on the truth of the entire assertion rather than on only one constituent. Thus, (3a) reflects the speaker's emphatic claim that he/she likes the valseo and the habaneras, despite the fact that the interlocutor might suspect otherwise. Similarly, *bien que* is used in (3b) to express a strong degree of confidence on the part of the speaker about the truth of the proposition "You know why I got so angry".

The emphatic interpretation of the adverb with *que* allows us to relate this construction to a group of other verum-focus constructions documented in different languages. Verum focus, a focus on the polarity of an utterance, emphasizes the expression of the truth of a proposition, as Höhle (1988, 1992) pointed out. Verum focus can appear in the left periphery of sentences, as occurs in German, or can fall on constituents located in other positions of the sentence, as in English. Cross-linguistically, it can be realized in many different ways. In English and in Spanish, we find special kinds of lexical insertions to instantiate the verum operator: auxiliary verbs in English or the affirmative adverb in Spanish. Regardless of the



position, the focus really falls on a single constituent. In other words, it is not the meaning of the stressed expression that is the focus. Instead, the focus is used to emphasize the truth of the whole proposition.

The close connection of the verum focus with the concepts of truth, contrast, and emphasis allows researchers to connect the phenomenon with other aspects of the sentence, such as mood (Lohnstein 2018) and polarity (Goodhue 2022).

In English, a sentence like *Alex DOES love Blair* with the focus on *does*, is only felicitous, according to Gutzmann et al. (2020), in contexts in which there is a polar question corresponding to the propositional content of the utterance; in other words, the semantic value of the question should be whether *Alex loves Blair*. On the contrary, it is infelicitous in an out-of-the-blue context or in a context induced by the question of who Alex loves, since this question is not equivalent to the focus value of the whole assertion.<sup>2</sup>

One of the main ideas put forward by Gutzmann et al. (2020) that supports a discursive approach to focus is that the alternatives to the focused expression must be salient in the discourse context. In terms of the question being raised, *Is it raining?* and *Is it raining or is it not raining?* are equivalent. However, verum (*It is raining*) seems weird as an answer to the first question in a neutral context, whereas it seems much more natural as an answer to the second question. The reason lies in the fact that only the previous context appears in the second question in order to license focus.

Despite the fact that both questions introduce the question of whether it is raining, only the second question makes both alternatives salient. According to Gutzmann et al. (2020), the example shows that “the salience-based view of focus is stronger than the mere question-based view” (Gutzmann et al. 2020, pp. 7–8).<sup>3</sup>

This example shows that the previous background and the context are relevant in order to introduce a new sentence with a verum focus and that the question–answer environment can be useful to identify contrast and emphasis. Both ideas are found in the evidential adverb–*que* construction in Spanish.

As far as Spanish is concerned, the emphatic interpretation of the adverb with *que* allows us to relate this construction to a group of other fronting constructions documented in Spanish that display the so-called Verum Fronting Focus. These constructions, analyzed by Leonetti and Escandell-Vidal (2009), display the fronting of adjectival, nominal, prepositional, and adverb expressions, among others:

4. a. Algo has visto. →{Sí/seguro} que has visto  
 something have.prs.2sg seen →{yes/sure} that have.prs.2sg seen  
 algo.  
 something  
 ‘You have seen something. →Yes/surely you have seen something.’
- b. A alguien encontrarás. →{Sí/Seguro} que encontrarás a alguien.  
 to someone find.fut.2sg →{yes/sure} that find.fut.2sg to someone  
 ‘You will find someone.’ → ‘It’s sure that you will find someone.’
- c. Lo mismo creo yo. →Es cierto que yo  
 the same believe.prs.1sg I →be.prs.3sg true that I  
 creo lo mismo.  
 believe.prs.1sg the same  
 ‘That’s what I think, too.’ → ‘It’s true that I think so too.’
- d. Muy harto debe de estar. →Sí que debe de estar  
 very fed.up must.prs.3sg be →yes that must.prs.3sg be (muy)  
 harto  
 fed.up  
 ‘Very fed up he must be.’ → ‘Yes he (certainly) must be (very) fed up.’  
 (Leonetti and Escandell-Vidal 2009, p. 179)

The paraphrases offered by [Leonetti and Escandell-Vidal \(2009\)](#) show that “the polarity is in focus and the proposition stays in the background” ([Leonetti and Escandell-Vidal 2009](#), p. 179). The consequence of the fronting is not to mark the anteposed constituent as the focus but as the polarity of the sentence. For this reason, the emphatic interpretation is the result of a focus on sentence polarity: “When the polarity of a proposition is in focus, it is highlighted in contrast with its alternative” ([Leonetti and Escandell-Vidal 2009](#), p. 179). In other words, while focusing on the assertion of a propositional content, at the same time, it rejects any alternative proposition. In the final interpretation, propositional content is asserted in a very strong way.

[Poletto and Zanuttini \(2013\)](#) studied the properties of *sì che/non che* constructions in Italian. The dependence on a previous context is the main argument for proposing a functional structure in which a null copy of the triggering utterance is projected in the hanging topic position. This idea allowed the authors to explain that *sì che/no che* sentences cannot be embedded and, in particular, why the clause introduced by *che* cannot contain any constituent that was not already present in the triggering utterance.

In brief, *sí que* and *bien que* are constructions that are used to emphasize the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the proposition; in other words, they are used as emphatic affirmative polarity markers linked to the previous content. According to [Poletto and Zanuttini \(2013\)](#), *sì che/no che* sentences cannot contain material that was not present in the utterance to which they are a response.

In order to diagnose the presence of verum in different situations, [Gutzmann et al. \(2020\)](#) identified specific contexts that allow the expression of verum. First of all, in out-of-the-blue contexts, verum marking is infelicitous, since the propositional content of the utterance does not correspond to the previous context. Nevertheless, there are different discourse situations that allow for diagnosing verum.

There are contexts in which verum marking is optional. In these cases, stress on the auxiliary verbs in English leads to the interpretation of an emphatic statement introduced in the previous discourse context, as in the previous sentence: *Mary sings lovely* and the reply with stress on the auxiliary verb: *Yes, she DOES* ([Gutzmann et al. 2020](#)). The relevance of the previous information can also be detected in question–answer environments, especially in the *yes/no* question context ([Gutzmann and Castroviejo 2011](#); following [Romero and Han 2004](#)). In these cases, verum focus adds emphasis on the polarity of the answer. To the question of *Does she sing?*, the verum focus answer will be *Yes, she DOES*, appropriate if the speaker wishes to emphasize the fact that she DOES sing because, for example, they expect that somebody might doubt her ability to sing. Interestingly enough, in the context of a *yes/no* question, it is possible to document evidential adverbs followed by *que* as an emphatic answer to polarity, as Section 3.2 will show. [Gutzmann et al. \(2020\)](#) also identify opposite polarity contexts in which the truth value of a previous utterance is corrected or denied (see also [Wilder 2013](#)). In addition, they consider explicit alternative questions that make both the positive and the negative alternative salient and therefore directly license verum marking.

Recently, [Pujol i Campeny \(2023\)](#), by studying the historical development of *sí que* in Catalan, showed that the context previous to the *sí-que* construction often consists of a negated version of the proposition contained in the *sí que* clause: A: *Les pomes no t’agraden* “You do not like apples”. B: *Què what dius?* “What are you going on about?” *Sí que m’agraden. En menjo una cada dia.* “I DO like apples. I eat one every day” ([Pujol i Campeny 2023](#), p. 4). Additionally, *sí que* can emphatically confirm a positive assertion of a previous sentence when the tone in which it is uttered or the discourse context conveys doubt. Interestingly, both situations have in common that they are nonveridical since they express uncertainty and lack of commitment toward the proposition’s content ([Giannakidou 1998, 1999; Giannakidou and Mari 2021](#)). The non-veridical contexts provide an antecedent in the discourse—a discursive antecedent, following [Wilder \(2013\)](#)—that explains why *sí que* cannot occur in out-of-the-blue contexts.

The crucial point in all the contexts under review lies in the fact that, despite not being obligatorily marked, if employed, *verum* requires a more specific context than the version without *verum*. This idea is coherent with the data from evidential adverbs followed by *que* documented in Spanish since the previous context is necessary in order to be introduced in the new sentence by means of the conjunction. Additionally, evidential adverbs with *que* in examples in which there is no previous linguistic context need to refer to a common ground shared by speakers.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.2. Evidential Adverbs with *que*

Evidential adverbs, such as *ciertamente*, *obviamente*, *evidentemente*, *naturalmente*, and so forth, can be considered a special class of sentence adverbs that differ from modal adverbs. From a semantic point of view, evidential adverbs denote a much greater degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition than epistemic adverbs of doubt and possibility (*posiblemente*, *probablemente*, *seguramente*, and the like), which assign a truth value to the proposition they modify because the speaker gives credibility to what he/she says when using the former. In this sense, evidential adverbs reinforce the truth of the proposition relative to which the speaker gives his/her opinion, which means that there is no doubt about the truth of the statement. Moreover, evidential adverbs differ from factive adverbs (*lamentablemente*, *afortunadamente*, and so on) in that the latter, by assuming the truth of a sentence, establish an evaluation of that truth by the speaker, whereas evidential adverbs show the speaker's affirmative opinion of the truth value of the proposition that he/she utters. The speaker can present this statement to the listener from different points of view depending on the degree of acceptability that he/she considers it to possess—that is, as a logical deduction or certainty with *lógicamente* and *ciertamente* in (5), as general evidence in the case of *obviamente* and *evidentemente* (6), or as evidence of natural order as in *naturalmente* (7):

5. El director del Cendes opina que '*ciertamente* la tolerancia es un principio fundamental de la convivencia entre los seres humanos'  
'The director of Cendes believes that certainly tolerance is a fundamental principle of coexistence among human beings'.  
(CREA, *El Universal*, 09/10/1996, Venezuela, 1996)
6. Dice que *evidentemente* los latinoamericanos son "los principales usuarios del lenguaje español"  
'He says that evidently Latin Americans are "the main users of the Spanish language"'.  
(CREA, *La Prensa de Nicaragua. Suplemento de Informática*, 10/04/2001, Nicaragua)
7. El índice de obras prohibidas por la Inquisición española (incluyendo a Erasmo y a Maquiavelo) era más duro que el del propio Papa. Felipe II prohibió que los españoles estudiaran en el extranjero, con la salvedad de Roma. Este enclaustramiento intelectual afectó la importación y, *naturalmente*, la publicación de libros en la propia España.  
'The index of works banned by the Spanish Inquisition (including Erasmus and Machiavelli) was harsher than that of the Pope himself. Philip II forbade Spaniards to study abroad, with the exception of Rome. This intellectual cloistering affected the importation and, naturally, the publication of books in Spain itself'.  
(CREA, 1992, Fuentes, Carlos, *El espejo enterrado*, Mexico)

Thus, evidential adverbs not only affirm the truth of a proposition but also show the degree of acceptability that the speaker assigns to that proposition and based on which the listener must judge it.

Evidential adverbs can also be used to express an affirmation with an emphatic content instead of the adverb "yes", as can be seen in the following examples:



8. Este grupo parlamentario autonomista radical, ¿establecerá contactos con los catalanes nombrados senadores por el Rey?  
 ‘Will this radical autonomist parliamentary group establish contacts with the Catalans appointed senators by the King?’  
 - *Evidentemente*, tendrá contactos y yo diría que una gran colaboración.  
 - ‘Evidently, it will have contacts and I would say a great collaboration’.  
 (CREA, *Triunfo*, 9 July 1977, Spain)
9. -¿Hay que mantener estas tradiciones?  
 ‘Is it necessary to maintain these traditions?’  
 - *Naturalmente*. En Andalucía saben hacerlo.  
 ‘Of course. In Andalusia they know how to do it’.  
 (CREA, 2003 *El Mundo* (Suplemento), Spain)

These examples illustrate the affirmative value that evidential adverbs possess, as well as their link to the expression of emphatic affirmation. This does not mean that the evidential adverbs and the affirmative adverbs are equivalent since they can co-occur, as can be seen in the example in (10):

10. ¿Usted cree que le imagen de su padre se ha ido deteriorando con el tiempo?  
 ‘Do you think that your father’s image has deteriorated over time?’  
 - *Lógicamente, sí*. Él ha utilizado todos los medios posibles, buenos y malos, para que el tema Rumasa no caiga en el olvido. Lo que en realidad ha conseguido.  
 - ‘Logically, yes, he has used all possible means, good and bad, so that the Rumasa issue does not fall into oblivion. Which he has actually achieved’.  
 (CREA, *Tiempo*, 9 April 1990, Spain)

In these contexts, the evidential adverb followed by the conjunction *que* frequently appears. It appears that the sharing of the same affirmative character allows for the development of the conjunction *que* with evidential and polarity items.

The presence of *que* in (11) is not merely optional, which is equivalent to affirming that such examples are not equivalent to the examples in (5)–(11), in which the conjunction is not projected. As seen in the examples of *sí que* and *bien que*, evidential adverbs with *que* have a clear emphatic value and are only appropriate as a reaction to a previous utterance. Consider the following examples:

11. ¿Comparte usted la opinión de los que dicen que la música clásica en directo atraviesa una importante crisis?  
 ‘Do you share the opinion of those who say that live classical music is going through a major crisis?’  

<i>Naturalmente</i>	<i>que</i>	la	hay	... y por muchas razones.
Naturally	that	CLACU	there is ...	

 ‘Of course there is, and for many reasons’.  
 (CREA, *El País*, 16 April 1997, Spain)
12. ¿Es cierto que Calvià es el pueblo más rico de España y Europa?  
 ‘Is it true that Calvià is the richest town in Spain and Europe?’  
 - Si se toma el número de habitantes y se divide por el Producto Bruto,  
*evidentemente* *que* *sí*.  
 obviously that yes.  
 O si se mira nuestro presupuesto y se divide por el número de habitantes,  
*por supuesto* *que* *sí*.  
 of course that yes  
 - ‘If you take the number of inhabitants and divide it by the Gross Product, obviously. Or if you look at our budget and divide it by the number of inhabitants, of course it is’.  
 (CREA, 1990, *Cambio 16*, Spain)
13. Para nosotros, *ciertamente* *que* la democracia...  
 For us certainly that the democracy...  
 es el mejor sistema político.  
 ‘For us, certainly democracy is the best political system’.  
 (CREA, *El Universal*, 27 October 1996, Venezuela)

The adverb followed by the conjunction draws on a previous context and repeats it; an emphatic value is incorporated in this repetition. In yes/no question contexts, what we are interested in verifying is precisely the existence of the previous context as a frame that is reintroduced in the answer by means of the construction with *que* in order to give the new structure an emphatic value.<sup>5</sup>

In (11), the sentence introduced by the evidential adverb is interpreted as an emphatic affirmative answer to the previous question; in (12), the sentence headed by *evidentemente que* serves to contrast the affirmation introduced by such expressions with other possible answers that are emphatically denied. For these reasons, this construction is related to the verum focus fronting examples (4). The fact that the previous sentence or content is reintroduced and asserted contributes to reinforcing the strength and emphasis of the new assertion. In the same way as the examples of verum focus fronting, in evidential adverbs with *que* constructions, the emphatic interpretation is a consequence of reintroducing background information and removing any competing assumptions from the context.

As in the case of *sí que* constructions, evidential adverbs with *que* have scope over the main assertion of the sentence in order to emphasize the truth value of the proposition. In other words, the speaker is signaling his/her commitment to the truth of the entire proposition in the evidential adverb *que* context and is not emphasizing only one lexical component. Thus, the result is an emphatic affirmation of one of the alternatives and a contrast to the opposite option, which is thus rejected. The emphasis is the result of recovering propositional content that was already present in the previous discourse in order to assert the affirmative proposition while simultaneously rejecting its negative counterpart (Leonetti and Escandell-Vidal 2009).

Let us return to the example in (13), which is the beginning of an article published in a Venezuelan newspaper. The absence of a previous sentence or text is striking since *ciertamente que* cannot refer to any previous linguistic structure. As indicated in previous research (Rodríguez Ramalle 2008), it is the shared knowledge of a situation or the extralinguistic context that is present in the consciousness of the speakers and that, in reality, is recovered and introduced by means of the conjunction. Therefore, we are faced with two possible types of situations: those in which it is effectively the previous discourse that is incorporated as a complement to the conjunction and others, as in the case of the example in (13), in which it is previous knowledge that is reflected directly in the discourse that is adopted.

The adverbs studied in this paper belong to the class of so-called evidential adverbs. As already stated at the beginning of Section 3.2, this label does not mean that evidential adverbs have content related to the sources of the information but that they denote a much greater degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition than epistemic adverbs of doubt and possibility. However, examples such as the one in (13) evoking shared knowledge that is reintroduced by the conjunction allow us to connect the interpretation of the example with pragmatic references related to the expression of evidentiality and, more specifically, with one of the three most common types of evidence in the crosslinguistic picture, namely, reportative evidence (Willett 1988; Aikhenvald 2004, 2006, 2018; Dendale and Tasmowski 2001; Cornillie 2009; among many others).

In order to determine whether evidential adverbs with *que* are linked to the expression of some type of evidentiality, especially reportative evidence, it may be of interest to compare, at least briefly, what happens with *dizque*, a discourse particle used in areas of Latin American Spanish (Olbertz 2007; Demonte and Fernández-Soriano 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2020, 2022; De la Mora and Maldonado 2015; Saito 2019, 2021; Martínez Vera 2019, 2023; Sanromán Vilas 2020; among others) that has been claimed to be compatible with second-hand and third-hand evidence, as well as with reports resulting from traditional stories (Palmer 2001). Direct and inferential evidence seems not to be relevant with evidential adverbs according to the examples documented in this section.

As pointed out by Martínez Vera (2023), the presence of doubt is a component of sentences with *dizque* in reportative interpretation, in which the speaker trusts or does not

trust the information introduced by *dizque* by considering whether the source of information is trustworthy. In this sense, the speaker acts as a kind of transmitter of information taken from a situation already heard, known, or present in the socio-cultural background (see example in 13). The speaker may move away from the truth of the proposition, and this is when the component of doubt appears. However, with evidential adverbs followed by *que*, there is no doubt but rather an emphatic affirmation of facts that are taken up to emphasize them. The background information reintroduced by evidential adverbs with *que* does not seem to be related to evidentiality as the source of information in the interpretation of *dizque* in the same Latin American Spanish varieties.

Reportative *que*, when it heads an independent sentence (Demonte and Fernández-Soriano 2013a, 2013b, 2014), can add effects of surprise, irony, and displeasure, which sometimes appear as secondary senses linked to the reportative meaning. For example, the sentence: (*Oye,*) *que he ganado la lotería* “Listen, I have won the lottery” (Demonte and Fernández-Soriano 2013b, p. 223) is felicitous if the speaker has just heard or been told that he or she has won the lottery and is very surprised. As far as evidential adverbs with *que* are concerned, as in example (13), no additional overtones are documented in our data.

#### 4. On Variation

##### 4.1. The Case of *sí que*

Villa-García and González Rodríguez (2020b) analyzed the dialectal variation in the development of the conjunction *que*. I adopt this research as a point of reference in this section.

According to Villa-García and González Rodríguez (2020b), *sí* is frequently used in place of *sí que* as a formal marker of the speaker’s commitment to the proposition in some varieties of Latin American Spanish. This usage is documented in the Spanish varieties spoken in Colombia, Mexico, and Peru. Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, and Ecuador report more *que* and less *sí* usage than is documented in European Spanish.

In Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, there are contexts in which *que* is absent in the same situations in which *sí que* is employed:

14. a. A eso      *sí*      no puedo    acostumbrarme,    al      chocolate malo.  
to that      yes      no can      get-used      to-the chocolate bad  
‘I certainly cannot get used to that, to bad chocolate.’  
(Rafael Delgado, Angelina, Mexico, 1983)
- b. Eso *sí*      no sé  
that yes      no  
I-know.  
‘I certainly do not know that.’  
(Juan Gabriel Vásquez, *El ruido de las cosas al caer*, Colombia, 2011)  
(Villa-García and González Rodríguez 2020b, p. 8).

In (14), *que* could be introduced without giving rise to any syntactic or semantic change. In fact, the equivalent of the examples in (14) European Spanish could contain *sí que* constructions because the examples in (14) imply an emphatic affirmation that affects sentence polarity. According to this idea, (14a) reflects the speaker’s emphatic claim that s/he cannot get used to bad chocolate. In example (14b), *sí que* allows the speaker to express a strong degree of confidence about the fact that they do not know anything. What is important here is that the conjunction could be introduced in (14) without giving rise to any syntactic or semantic changes.

Nevertheless, there are examples in which the presence of *que* is legitimate, as shown in (15), with a form and a meaning identical to the Latin American and European Spanish counterparts:

15. a. ¡Esto *sí* *que* no lo puedo creer!  
 this yes that not CLACU can believe  
 ‘I certainly cannot believe this!’  
 (CORPES XXI, 2001, Isaac Goldemberg, *El nombre del padre*, Peru)
- b. Yo no sé por qué regresé acá, pero ahora *sí* *que* no  
 I not know why returned here but now yes that not  
 vuelvo.  
 return  
 ‘I don’t know why I returned, but now I certainly will not return.’  
 (CORPES XXI, 2001, Gabriel Velasco, *Alondra de ojos en las alas*, Mexico)  
 (Villa-García and González Rodríguez 2020b, p. 7).

In Peru and Mexico, there are examples in which the conjunction may or may not be present without a change in interpretation, which differentiates these usages from those documented in other varieties of Spanish. In other words, *sí* and *sí que* are interchangeable in Peru and Mexico, as pointed out by Villa-García and González Rodríguez (2020b).

16. a. Esta pregunta *sí* *que* no la contestó.  
 this question yes that not CL-ACU answered
- b. Esta pregunta *sí* no la contestó.  
 this question yes not CL-ACU answered  
 ‘S/he certainly did not answer this question.’  
 (Villa-García and González Rodríguez 2020b, p. 8).

To reflect the complex panorama of the use of the conjunction *que* with the adverb *sí*, Villa-García and González Rodríguez (2020b) proposed that, in addition to the presence of *sí* and *sí que*, there was a third option: the existence of *sí-Ø*, a construction that would allow us to account for examples such as those in (14) in which *sí que* and *sí* appear to be interchangeable. The *sí-Ø* construction occurs in contexts in which *sí* is a formal marker of the speaker’s commitment to the proposition, and its use depends on the previous context, which is identical to *sí que* interpretations.<sup>6</sup>

In conclusion, the difference between Latin American Spanish varieties in which *que* might be missing and European Spanish relies on the fact that *que* can receive a silent/null phonetic form (PF) of spelling in some Latin American varieties. Accordingly, in Colombian, Mexican, and Peruvian Spanish, “*sí que/Ø* is a construction used to herald the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the proposition embedded” (Villa-García and González Rodríguez 2020b, p. 17; italics added).

Given the relationship between evidential adverbs and the polarity adverb, we should not be surprised that there may also be dialectal variations in the extension of the conjunction *que* with evidential adverbs. On the basis of this hypothesis, I test the vitality and interpretation of evidential adverbs with *que* in Latin American Spanish by taking the developmental pattern of *sí* to *sí que* into account. It should be pointed out that the objective is not to apply the proposal of Villa-García and González Rodríguez (2020b) to the study of evidential adverbs but rather to verify the contexts in which the conjunction appears in Spanish, including all its varieties, as well as its vitality and diffusion.

#### 4.2. The Distribution of Evidential Adverbs with *que* in Spanish

In the countries studied, evidential adverbs followed by *que*, when documented, appeared in the same contexts—that is, as a response to a previous yes/no question and as a reinforcement of the speaker’s opinion based on a previous situation in the monological context.

Evidential adverbs can link the sentence they head to a triggering utterance or to shared knowledge. These values are documented in Latin American and European Spanish.

Evidential adverbs with *que* appear extremely frequently in question-and-answer environments throughout the Spanish-speaking domain, as can be seen in the data from Chile, Mexico, and Guatemala:

17. -¿Hay algún sueño que usted tenía antes de asumir y que ya tuvo que descartar?  
 'Are there any dreams you had before taking over that you had to discard?'  
 -Sí, *ciertamente que* teníamos muchos sueños. . .  
 Yes *certainly that* we-have many dreams. . .  
 pero hay algunos que no voy a descartar.  
 -'Yes, we certainly had many dreams. . . but there are some that I am not going to discard'.  
 (CORPES XXI, *El Mercurio*, 7 March 2010, Chile)
18. En esta lucha fuera de las reglas ¿está incluida Marta Sahagún?  
 'Is Marta Sahagún included in this fight outside the rules?'  
 - *que* sí. Todo *está* fuera de las reglas.  
*Naturalmente*  
 Naturally *that* yes. Everything *is* outside of the rules  
 - 'Of course she is. Everything is outside the rules'  
 (CORPES XXI, *La Jornada*, 2004, Mexico)
19. Los problemas de los particulares *Naturalmente que* no.  
 muy pocos se conocen, ante un  
 sistema estructurado  
 específicamente para no administrar  
 justicia, ¿Podemos esperar una  
 justicia pronta y cumplida?  
 Naturally *that* not  
 'Very few of the problems that individuals experience are known, in the face of a system  
 specifically structured not to administer justice, can we expect a prompt and fulfilled justice?  
 Of course not.'  
 (CORPES XXI, *La Hora*, 31 December 2013, Guatemala)

In this situation, it is not unusual to find adverbs with positive and negative polarity as complements introduced by the conjunction:

20. Buenas noches, *sí que* es una buena noche. *Ciertamente que sí*  
 Good night, *yes that* is a good night *Certainly that* yes  
 -musitó. Dio la media vuelta.  
 'Good night, it's a good night. It certainly is,' he muttered. He turned around'.  
 (CORPES XXI, 2002, Sánchez Delgado, Edwin, *Al sur del siglo*, Nicaragua)
21. -¿Tendría que ser aquí?, preguntó Valiere tornándose más solícita.  
 'Should it be here?' asked Valiere, becoming more solicitous.'  
 -No, *naturalmente que* no, donde usted *guste* Valiere.  
 Not, naturally *that* not where you like Valiere  
 'No, of course not, wherever you like, Valiere.'  
 (CORPES XXI, 2008, Darío Durán, Rafael, *Con el diablo en el cuerpo*, Dominican Republic)

As indicated in Section 3.2, it is also possible to infer the existence of a previous context in which the argument to which the adverb refers is expressed in certain examples. I found examples of this use in countries such as Uruguay and Venezuela:



22. El Chile institucionalizado que salió a conquistar el mundo, el Chile moderno y pujante que hoy conocemos es obra de los gobiernos democráticos, socialistas, democristianos y liberales. Nosotros tuvimos ese espíritu en el primer batallismo. Eso es lo que tenemos que hacer. *Obviamente que* no vamos a cambiar a la policía de hoy para mañana, pero podemos hacer cosas en el corto plazo.  
 ‘The institutionalized Chile that went out to conquer the world, the modern and thriving Chile that we know today is the work of democratic, socialist, Christian democratic and liberal governments. We had that spirit in the first struggle. That is what we have to do. Obviously we are not going to change the police overnight, but we can do things in the short term.’  
 (CORPES XXI, 2019, García, Alfredo and Lauro, Jorge, *Voces*, Uruguay)
23. Entretanto, en Venezuela, el chavismo se aferra al mercantilismo predieciochesco, al marxismo fracasado de los siglos XIX y XX, y al esquema dictatorial de invasiones, persecuciones, asesinatos, carcelazos políticos, torturas, atropellos a jóvenes y a mujeres, “pinchaduras” de teléfonos, y toda la gama de “virtudes” que adornan a los regímenes totalitarios. *Ciertamente que*, como alguien dijo alguna vez, no somos suizos. ¡Ni siquiera somos chinos!  
 ‘Meanwhile, in Venezuela, Chavism clings to the pre-Dieciochesque mercantilism, to the failed Marxism of the 19th and 20th centuries, and to the dictatorial scheme of invasions, persecutions, assassinations, political imprisonments, tortures, outrages against young people and women, “tapping” of telephones, and the whole range of “virtues” that adorn totalitarian regimes. Certainly, as someone once said, we are not Swiss, we are not even Chinese!’  
 (CORPES XXI, 2006, Salas Falcón, Fernando, *Tampoco somos chinos*, Venezuela)

In the examples in (22) and (23), the sentence introduced by the conjunction does not appear in the triggering discourse, but we can infer that it had either been uttered at some previous moment or was part of the knowledge of the situation shared by the speakers; therefore, it can be taken up and reintroduced in the conversation by means of the construction headed by the evidential adverb. In (23), for example, *como alguien dijo una vez*, the content that is being introduced by *ciertamente que* shows that the evidential adverb with the conjunction can be also used to take up triggering information shared by the speakers.

Furthermore, the adverb followed by the conjunction is used to link the arguments that are presented and to justify the speaker’s point of view. The following examples are from Mexico and Chile:

24. En la primera etapa de su amistad, es claro que Borges asumió el papel de maestro y Bioy el de discípulo. [...]
 ‘In the first stage of their friendship, it is clear that Borges assumed the role of teacher and Bioy that of disciple.’  
 La relación, sin embargo, se fue modificando con el paso del tiempo. *Naturalmente que* Bioy siempre vio en Borges a un maestro literario, pero su amistad se transformó pronto en una relación de iguales.  
 The relationship, however, changed with the passage of time. Naturally, Bioy always saw in Borges a literary master, but their friendship soon turned into a relationship of equals.’  
 (CORPES XXI, 2007, Sol Mora, Pablo, *Borges, de Adolfo Bioy Casares*, Mexico)
25. Aquí hay un evidente abandono del gobierno, o lo hubo hasta ahora, en muchos temas. Así es que, desde ese punto de vista, lo encuentro justo. *Evidentemente que* no me gusta la forma, ni menos que una ciudad se corte por un mes.  
 ‘Here there is an evident neglect by the government, or there was until now, on many issues. So, from that point of view, I find it fair. Obviously I do not like the way, and even less that a city is cut for a month.’  
 (CORPES XXI, 2012, De la Fuente, Antonieta, *La gran apuesta*, Chile)

Evidential adverbs make it possible to establish a link between the previous discourse and the sentence introduced by the conjunction, which is justified by the speaker’s point of view. The sentence introducing the adverb followed by the conjunction does not repeat the previous discourse in this case. Strictly speaking, it also does not constitute part of shared

knowledge, but from the speaker's point of view, its content can be inferred on the basis of a consecutive relationship between the sentence that it heads and the preceding one. This fact has been observed for evidential adverbs in general and for *naturalmente* in particular in previous studies, such as those by [Sánchez Jiménez \(2008, 2013\)](#).

In the example in (24), the paragraph prior to the projection of the adverb refers to the relationship between Borges and Bioy Casares; the sentence immediately preceding *evidentemente que* informs us that this relationship changed over time and that the construction *evidentemente que* introduces an assertion that is a consequence of the entire previous presentation of the relationship between the two writers. *Naturalmente que* indicates that the truth value of the sentence is stressed; thus, the consecutive relationship between the previous discourse and the sentence headed by *naturalmente que* is interpreted as a natural and logical consequence.

The data that I have presented were taken from the Hispanic domain, which indicates that the construction can be documented in the same contexts in both Europe and Latin America.

Once the contexts of appearance have been described, evaluating the extension of the conjunction *que* with evidential adverbs in the Hispanic domain requires a comparison of what happens when the conjunction appears or does not appear in the same discursive contexts in different Latin American varieties, including those in which the frequency of occurrence of the conjunction with the evidential adverb is not particularly high.

#### 4.3. A Comparison: Evidential Adverbs with and without *que*

It is possible to find situations in which evidential adverbs with and without *que* are both documented in the same environment but with different interpretations. Consider the following two examples from a question-and-answer environment in the Dominican Republic:

26. ¿Tendría que ser aquí?, preguntó Valiere tornándose más solícita.  
       'Should it be here, Valiere asked, becoming more solicitous.'  
       - No, *naturalmente que no*, donde usted guste Valiere.  
       -'No, of course not, wherever you like, Valiere.'  
       (CORPES XXI, Darío Durán, Rafael, *Con el diablo en el cuerpo*, 2008, Dominican Republic)
27. El Metre: Se ve que gustan; llegaste rápido. . . Bueno, te puedes llevar estas. Pásalas por sitios diferentes, ¿eh?  
       'El Metre: I can see you like them; you got here fast. . . Well, you can take these with you.  
       Pass them through different places, huh?'  
       Chicho: *Naturalmente*, señor.  
       'Chicho: Of course, sir.'  
       (CORPES XXI, García Guerra, Iván, *Memorias de abril*, 2002, Dominican Republic)

While *naturalmente que no* in (26) has an emphatic import, *Naturalmente* in (27) expresses an affirmative response. Parallels can be established in the question-and-answer environment and within an argument. In Argentina, it is possible to find examples of *obviamente* with *que* (29) and without *que* (28, 30, and 31) in monological contexts and in oral data:

28. En consecuencia la persona que desea la consagración se ve inscripta (y si tiene suerte) en circuitos de reconocimiento, estos circuitos son mediáticos, profesionales o comerciales según el lugar. En algunos lugares esta consagración, será mediática, en otros lugares será profesional y en otros será comercial. Si nosotros hablamos de consagración dentro de la Universidad, *obviamente* es profesional. Un profesor que gana una cátedra por concurso obviamente *que* alcanza profesionalmente una consagración de tipo profesional, pero también podría ser mediática.

- ‘Consequently, the person who desires consecration is enrolled (and if he/she is lucky) in recognition circuits, these circuits are media, professional or commercial depending on the place. In some places, this consecration will be mediatic, in other places, it will be professional and in others it will be commercial. If we speak of consecration within the University, it is obviously professional. A professor who wins a professorship by competition obviously achieves a professional consecration, but it could also be mediatic.’ (CORPES XXI, Peñafort, Eduardo, *Reflejando. Charlas y debates*, 2003, Argentina)
29. pues mira me quedo lo mejor que ha pasado // gracias por buenos momentos y hasta aquí Hoy sale el sol es/o sea tiene aparte como toques Beatles en algunas partes/es composición de Alfonso Samos/*obviamente que*/que tiene ese punto tan anglo.  
‘well, look, I’ll take the best thing that ever happened // thanks for the good times and up to here Hoy sale el sol is/I mean, it has some Beatles touches in some parts/it’s a composition by Alfonso Samos/obviously/it has that Anglo touch.’  
(CORPES XXI, oral, 2013, Argentina)
30. gracias a Dios no he sido nunca cuestionada en que canto bien // entonces/mi trabajo es cantar bien/es como decir bueno/pues tengo tres kilos más/tres kilos menos es que la imagen me la trae un poco al paio/*obviamente*/estoy más pendiente de/de/de afinar en un directo.  
‘thank God I’ve never been questioned about singing well // so/my job is to sing well/it’s like saying well/I’m three kilos heavier/three kilos lighter, I don’t give a damn about image/obviously/I’m more concerned about/about/tuning up for a live performance.’  
(CORPES XXI, oral, 2013, Argentina)
31. Me sorprendieron esos insultos, pero no me extrañaron porque estamos en un año político en el club. *Obviamente* a uno le molesta y le duele que lo puteen.  
‘I was surprised by those insults, but I didn’t find it odd because we are in a political year at the club. Obviously it bothers and hurts to be insulted.’  
(CORPES XXI, *Clarín*, 19 May 2004, Argentina)

In (28), *obviamente que* not only reintroduces a triggering context (*consagración dentro de la Universidad*) but also emphasizes the idea that is reintroduced. The examples in (29) and (30) are oral data from the same speaker. In (30), the fact of *singing well* is mentioned previously and is contrasted with the physical aspect. The presence of *que* could also be justified in (29). Of note, the same speaker was responsible for the example in (30), in which she chose to use the conjunction. In (31), the conjunction would be projected in order to emphasize the affirmative point of view that the speaker wanted to highlight; nevertheless, the absence of *que* reveals that this emphatic import is not present. In brief, the options with and without a conjunction in Argentina have different interpretations. In other words, the projection of *que* is always an option that is able to differentiate meanings.

I did not find sufficient data without *que* in the question-and-answer environments in Chile and Mexico. As for Mexico, I did not find oral data with *ciertamente* in CORPES XXI; with *evidentemente* and *naturalmente*, the documented examples do not have *que*. Thus, there is the option of comparing and establishing possible differences between the presence and absence of *que* in a monological context:

32. Y al final pensé que el culpable podía estar entre las personas que nunca conocería.  
‘And in the end I thought that the culprit could be among the people I would never meet.’  
Así empecé a leer las cartas.  
‘So I started to read the letters.’  
*Obviamente* no las leo todas. No tengo tiempo.  
‘Obviously I don’t read them all. I don’t have time.’  
(CORPES XXI, Pavez Goye, Eduardo: «Taská». Cárez-Lorca, Sebastián . . . et al.: XIV y XV Muestra de Dramaturgia Nacional, 2011, Chile)
33. Genaro y Reynaldo ríen, buscan un lugar cómodo y se sientan. Camilo saca una cerveza caguama de algún lugar. *Evidentemente* la cerveza está caliente.  
‘Genaro and Reynaldo laugh, look for a comfortable place and sit down. Camilo pulls a caguama beer from somewhere. Evidently the beer is warm.’  
(CORPES XXI, Serrano, Daniel, *La conquista del Gordo*. [www.dramared.com](http://www.dramared.com), 10 May 2012, Mexico)

In (32), the projection of the conjunction is possible because it is connected to an existing context in which there is an explicit reference to the letters and to the act of reading them; the adverb refers to this content to deny it. However, the emphasis on the entire affirmation is not highlighted in this example. In (33), in which the sentence *Evidentemente la cerveza está caliente* is linked directly to the situation that was mentioned previously (someone takes a beer from somewhere, but the beer is hot), the relevant import of the sequence introduced by *evidentemente* (without *que*) consists of claiming that the beer is indeed warm in a way that appears to establish a contrast with the expected alternative, which is that the beer will be cold. If we, as listeners, accept this interpretation, *evidentemente* is used as *evidentemente que*.

This last situation can be related to the one that I documented in Venezuela in CREA, in which there are examples that lead to another conclusion, which is more along the lines of some examples of alternation between *sí* and *sí que* that were highlighted by [Villa-García and González Rodríguez \(2020b\)](#). Let us reconsider the data in (4) and (13), repeated here as (34) and (35), respectively:

34. Para nosotros, *ciertamente que* la democracia es el mejor sistema político. Lo que lamentamos con mucha frecuencia es que es en medio de él cuando se han dado las mayores crisis y los mayores actos de corrupción en la historia de nuestra Venezuela.  
'For us, democracy is certainly the best political system. What we regret very often is that it is in the midst of it that the greatest crises and the greatest acts of corruption in the history of our Venezuela have taken place.'  
(CREA, *El Universal*, 27 October 1996, Venezuela)
35. El director del Cendes opina que '*ciertamente* la tolerancia es un principio fundamental de la convivencia entre los seres humanos, especialmente en América Latina donde hay diferencias tan notorias entre los diferentes grupos socioeconómicos'.  
'The director of Cendes believes that "tolerance is certainly a fundamental principle of coexistence among human beings, especially in Latin America where there are such notorious differences between different socioeconomic groups".'  
(CREA, *El Universal*, 09 October 1996, Venezuela)

In (34), the discursive context is similar to that in (35) in which *ciertamente que* appears, which leads us to consider that *ciertamente* in (34) may develop some value that is similar to that of *ciertamente que*. It is interesting to note that, when the adverb followed by the conjunction reintroduces an affirmation based on the knowledge shared by the interlocutors, as we saw in Section 3.2, the conjunction is projected. The absence of the conjunction in (34) may be a way of avoiding the possible repetition of *que*. However, what is relevant here is that the previous situation is presented because a quotation appears in the text.

It is difficult to find contexts such as those found in Venezuela in other Latin American varieties. Therefore, it is necessary to resort to oral data, as in (29) and (30) in Argentina or (36) and (37) below in Peru, in which references to prior knowledge of the discursive situation and the emphasis on uncontrolled conversational contexts can serve as support for the projection of the conjunction. The following oral examples are from Peru:

36. pero ¿qué hace usted // frente al pedido de la gente que ha votado por nosotros // y que nos dice doctora hace cinco seis años que no llega mi pensión de jubilación? // *naturalmente que* no puedo hacer oídos sordos / frente a un pedido de una persona  
'but what do you do // in response to the request of the people who voted for us // and who tell us doctor, it's been five six years since my retirement pension arrived? // of course I can't turn a deaf ear // to a request from a person'  
(CORPES XXI, oral, 2001, Peru)
37. una // recuperación // eeh de la economía una recuperación de la demanda // que nos hace abrigar / ciertas esperanzas ¿no? // *naturalmente* también hay // dificultades ¿no?  
'a // recovery // of the economy a recovery of demand // that gives us some hope, right? // of course there are also // difficulties, right?'  
(CORPES XXI, oral, 2003, Peru)

These examples are particularly interesting because if we compare (36) and (37), the interpretation is the same. In (37), the conjunction option, although not expressed, is inferred given that we start with a previous context that is used to emphasize the truth value of the proposition. The equivalent of this example to the varieties that commonly document the construction with *que* would be the following: *Naturalmente que también hay dificultades*.

According to what I have shown, the monologic discursive context and the use of oral data assist in finding examples in which there may be greater use of the conjunction with evidential adverbs, as well as the possible use of the adverb without *que*, but with an interpretation that is identical to that of the construction with the projected conjunction, although this last situation is not widespread.

## 5. Discussion

Evidential adverbs followed by *que* are documented in the same contexts in all Spanish linguistic areas. The presence of the conjunction reveals that there is a previous context or shared knowledge that is retrieved and reintroduced in the new sentence in order to emphasize the speaker's point of view and his/her commitment to the truth of the proposition.

Therefore, the discursive context is crucial to understanding the development and meaning of the constructions with *que*, as well as the possibility that the evidential adverb without *que* may develop the same interpretation as the evidential adverb followed by *que*, although this possibility is very limited according to what I found in the corpus. The oral data provide additional examples of the presence or absence of the conjunction; since the speaker wants to stress the truth value of the sentence, they add emphasis to demonstrate their commitment to the propositional content.

According to Rodríguez Molina (2014), the appearance of the conjunction *que* after the affirmative adverb would indeed be part of the last step in the evolution of polarity items. However, the extension of *que*—and the option of the null conjunction according to Villa-García and González Rodríguez (2020b)—has not been completed in all dialectal areas. It is not possible to confirm that the null variant is widely used with evidential adverbs.

Villa-García and González Rodríguez (2020b) posited that the option of having a variant with an unrealized conjunction that is present in the structure as an element without phonetic materialization was possible for certain dialectal varieties in which *sí* and *sí que* have developed an identical value. The data with evidential adverbs do not allow us to confirm that an identical option is extended to Latin American Spanish, but we can find some tendencies in specific discursive situations, which is what I consider to be most relevant.

It is necessary to seek out contexts in which the option of a null category is allowed. The objective is to recover the value of the unrealized element from the context, and it is precisely in this regard that I have found data that can help explain the non-realization of *que* in Venezuela or Peru based on the examples in (32) and (34). When the conjunction is missing, what appears to occur is that the evidential adverb without *que* reintroduces the previous discourse or situation in the new utterance: This occurred in the example in (32), which was documented in Venezuela. In the example, we can see that there is a highly specific context dependency that is repeated regardless of whether the conjunction is present or not. This previous context is not generally a question but rather part of an argument in which the speaker uses the construction to reintroduce content that was expressed previously in order to present it again in an emphatic way. In other cases, the content introduced by the evidential adverb with or without *que* is part of the shared knowledge. In both cases, the reference to triggering information appears explicitly, which allows for the recovery of the functional interpretation of *que* as a discourse-oriented category, in examples in which the conjunction is not materialized. The discourse orientation is an argument that could be justified in proposing that the conjunction *que*, when it co-occurs with evidential



adverbs, occupies a different position in the functional structure from that occupied by the conjunction as a subordinating mark that introduces subordinate sentences.

As far as the position of the construction in the functional structure of a sentence is concerned, [Hernanz \(2006\)](#), [Kocher \(2017\)](#), [Poletto and Zanuttini \(2013\)](#), [Villa-García and González Rodríguez \(2020a\)](#), and [Pujol i Campeny \(2023\)](#) provide different proposals about this topic, but there is a common assumption: the position of evidential and polarity adverbs followed by *que* should be higher than that occupied by the complementizer. For example, [Villa-García and González Rodríguez \(2020a, 2020b\)](#) point out that *sí que* sits in a functional space that is higher than FocusP—where the affirmative *sí* is assumed to be located after moving to that position from  $\Sigma P$ —since it can select affirmative and negative adverbs as complements: *Sí que sí* (yes that yes), *Sí que no* (yes that no). Although [Villa-García and González Rodríguez \(2020a, 2020b\)](#) do not specify the label of the projection, they argue for an assertive phrase.<sup>7</sup> [Kocher \(2017\)](#) associates *sí que* with a projection in the left periphery related to mood since it would host fronted constituents triggering a verum focus reading (see Section 3.1). For [Poletto and Zanuttini \(2013\)](#), *si/non che* structures in Italian are related to a functional projection located behind the Hanging Topic Phrase.

It is interesting to note that, according to [Poletto and Zanuttini \(2013\)](#), the topic's position is related to the background and the triggering information that is recovered by the *si/non che* structures. Since the content of the triggering utterance is crucial in order to interpret the construction with *que*, both linguistics suggest that the conversational context is projected syntactically as a null copy in the topic position relative to the hanging topics. This background is phonetically null and deleted before the materialization of the sentence.

The structure in (38) takes up the proposal of [Villa-García and González Rodríguez \(2020a, 2020b\)](#), but it has the idea that there is a hanging topic position located in the upper-left periphery; in other words, I assume, contrasting with the monoclausal analyses developed by [Hernanz \(2006\)](#) and [Villa-García and González Rodríguez \(2020a, 2020b\)](#), this is a biclausal analysis, similar to [Poletto and Zanuttini \(2013\)](#) and [Pujol i Campeny \(2023\)](#), in which there is a higher structure linked to the common ground and connected to the lower clause introduced by the conjunction:

38. [Hanging TopicP [XP adverb [X° que [FocusP [ $\Sigma P$  [TP ... ]]]]]  
(Based on [Poletto and Zanuttini 2013](#), p. 139; [Villa-García and González Rodríguez 2020b](#), p. 4)

According to (38), the previous discourse context is present in the structure of the new sentence introduced by evidential adverbs with *que* in the left-most periphery in a functional position related to hanging topics ([Cinque 1997](#); [Zubizarreta 1999](#); [Villalba 2000](#); [López 2009](#); [Tizón-Couto 2008](#); [Villa-García 2015](#); [Stark 2022](#); among others). These kinds of topicalizations have a number of properties that make them special topicalizations: they can be associated with virtually any syntactic function in the sentence to which they are adjacent; they can be connected with a resumptive element or strong pro-noun/demonstrative, an epithetic, a quantifier, etc.; and they are not sensitive to locality-of-movement constraints ([Villa-García 2015](#)). Hanging topics seem to be satellite constituents that are outside the sentence they accompany ([Cinque 1997](#); among others); for this reason, many of the properties that have been described are related to the fact that the hanging topics are somewhat structurally disconnected from the host sentence. Following this hypothesis, [Villa-García \(2023\)](#) offers an analysis that shows a radical departure from monosentential approaches, in line with the proposals of [Poletto and Zanuttini \(2013\)](#) and [Pujol i Campeny \(2023\)](#). [Villa-García](#) puts forward a paratactic account in which hanging topics belong to a preceding, elliptical sentence juxtaposed to the host sentence, according to the research by [Ott \(2014, 2015, 2016\)](#). According to this approach, there is background information in the conversation that can become part of the sentence periphery structure through the hanging topic position juxtaposed to the host sentence.

Poletto and Zanuttini's proposal, by including the hanging topics position to explain the crucial importance of the contextual element in the licensing of sentences with *si/non che* in Italian, implies not only that the context can occupy a place in the functional structure

of the left periphery but also that this contextual component, crucial for the interpretation of polarity adverbs with *que*, is juxtaposed to the host sentence, as [Villa-García \(2023\)](#) and [Villa-García and Ott \(2023\)](#) have argued. In other words, hanging topics as juxtaposed structures allow the inclusion of the background context in the left-most functional structure of the sentence, which shows why *sí*/evidential adverb–*que* constructions cannot occur in out-of-the-blue contexts.

In this paper, I have shown that the triggering context is reintroduced by the conjunction in the new sentence and that the previous context allows for the recovery of the functional interpretation of *que* in examples in which the conjunction is not materialized. For this reason, I assume, in line with [Poletto and Zanuttini \(2013\)](#), that the context as a functional projection called a hanging topic phrase occupies a higher space in the extended structure of the sentence.

Returning to the analysis of our data, there are two main situations and a third highly restricted one. Firstly, evidential adverbs that are not constructed with *que* are documented in all varieties of Spanish (Section 3.2). Secondly, the evidential adverb followed by *que*, with an emphatic value and a dependence on the previous discourse or situation, was also generally documented in all varieties of Spanish, although the presence of the conjunction did not appear to have the same frequency of use in all dialectal areas. This situation was found in question-and-answer contexts and in monologic contexts with differences in interpretation with regard to the evidential adverb without the conjunction. Finally, there was a minority situation in which the presence or absence of the conjunction did not change the final interpretation. It is here that we saw a tendency for the absence of the conjunction to develop in an extremely specific discursive context in which the reference to a triggering context and the emphatic import of the oral data are discursive requirements for understanding the option of recovering the value of the conjunction. In conclusion, the non-realization of *que* is an available option that depends directly on the discursive conditions that make it possible to recover the previous context introduced by the construction.

Comparing the analyzed varieties, it is observed that evidential adverbs followed by *que* are used in the same contexts in the reviewed countries. There are no differences among countries. The major contrast relies on the fact that not all countries document the absence of the conjunction in contexts in which its presence would be necessary to reintroduce a background content in order to emphasize it.

It is possible to find situations in which evidential adverbs with and without *que* are both documented in the same environment but have different interpretations. This is the most frequently documented situation, and it was found in all the countries under review. This situation appears in all contexts in which evidential adverbs with *que* are documented: question–answer environment (26–27, Dominican Republic), monological contexts (28–31, Argentina)—both in written discourses—and oral data (29–30, Argentina). According to this description, it can be stated that the projection of *que* is always an option that is able to differentiate meanings.

In some countries (Chile and Mexico), there are not enough data without *que* in the question-and-answer environments to compare the findings, but there are data in written monological and oral contexts. In monological contexts, the same data were observed in which an evidential adverb without *que* may develop a value that is similar to that of an evidential adverb with *que* (33, Mexico). Interestingly enough, in this situation, the adverb reintroduces an affirmation based on the knowledge shared by the interlocutors; (35, Venezuela). As far as oral data are concerned, it is also possible to find examples in which, despite the fact that the conjunction is not projected, the evidential adverb is used to emphasize the truth value of the proposition with an interpretation that is identical to that of the construction with the projected conjunction (37, Peru). In conclusion, there are countries where the use of the adverb without *que* in the same context as the evidential adverb with *que* is possible. According to our data, this situation is not widespread. These results are shown schematically in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Evidential adverbs and context of use.

	Written Context		Oral Context
	Question–answer contexts	Monologic contexts	Oral data
Evidential adverb – <i>que</i>	+	+	+
Evidential adverb + <i>que</i>	+	+	+
Evidential adverb + Ø	not documented	+ (Mexico, Venezuela)	+ (Peru)

According to the data, the context is important for evaluating the absence or presence of the conjunction, as we have mentioned. Moreover, the projection of the conjunction in question–answer contexts—in which the previous context acts as a background that is reintroduced in the answer—confirms the idea that this context acts as previous information or topic, in line with [Poletto and Zanuttini’s \(2013\)](#) proposal. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that this content, when reintroduced, allows us to obtain an emphatic reading, as explained by [Leonetti and Escandell-Vidal \(2009\)](#). Therefore, the evidential adverb and the evidential adverb followed by *que*/Ø give rise to different readings.

## 6. Conclusions

With regard to the extension of the conjunction *que* with the evidential adverbs studied, it was documented that the evidential adverbs *naturalmente*, “naturally”; *ciertamente* “certainly”; *obviamente*, “obviously”; and *evidentemente*, “evidently” are used in Latin American countries, but it is also true that in specific countries, these adverbs are used with *que* extremely rarely, if at all. Taking into account the percentage data pertaining to the number of adverb occurrences, Spain does not present data that allow us to conclude that the phenomenon of the development of the conjunction occurs more often in European Spanish than it does in Latin American Spanish.

With regard to the basic uses of the construction in countries in which it is documented, these uses answered previous questions, with the construction repeating part of the question or introducing the polarity adverb, thereby reproducing knowledge shared by the interlocutors or presenting arguments or justifications from the speaker’s point of view.

The analysis of the examples of adverbs with and without the conjunction in identical contexts showed that it was possible to find different situations in which the two constructions coexisted: evidential adverbs without *que*, evidential adverbs with *que*, and, sporadically, evidential adverbs without *que* that may become a manifestation of the evidential adverb with *que* construction because they can develop the same values. This situation was documented in specific discursive contexts in Venezuela, Peru, and Mexico, in which the speaker used the construction to recover a propositional content to represent it emphatically. In other cases, the triggering context introduced by the evidential adverb with or without *que* was part of shared knowledge. In both types of cases, the reference to the triggering information appeared explicitly and allowed for the recovery of the functional interpretation of *que* as a discourse-oriented category.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The date for statistical data is March 2021. For space reasons, I did not analyze the preferences according to the type of adverb and the differences between countries.
- <sup>2</sup> Research on the study of variation has been developed on the basis of Verum Focus as an intonational phenomenon; languages such as German and French have different intonational patterns, and as a consequence, the prosody realization of Verum Focus can vary, as was pointed out by [Turco et al. \(2012\)](#).
- <sup>3</sup> The discursive approach is also present in the Lexical Operator Thesis, which assumes that the verum accent is a way to realize a lexical verum expression, which is responsible for the special discourse conditions verum puts on the felicitous use of an utterance. I am very grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this reference
- <sup>4</sup> Interjections can also be followed by *que* with different meanings: see [Sánchez López \(2017\)](#). I did not analyze these types of constructions in this paper.
- <sup>5</sup> See [Krifka \(2004, 2015, 2016\)](#), [Romero \(2005, 2015\)](#), [Romero and Han \(2004\)](#), and [Farkas and Roelofsen \(2015\)](#), among others, for the interpretation of yes/no questions.
- <sup>6</sup> The non-realization of the conjunction is allowed in certain contexts, which can be seen as a more general phenomenon. This would be the case for the recomplementation of the type *María me dijo que esas manzanas (que) no le gustaban nada* (Maria told me that those apples (that) she didn't like at all). The optional second *que* is not extended in Latin American Spanish ([Martínez Vera 2019](#)). For recomplementation in Spanish, see [Villa-García \(2015\)](#).
- <sup>7</sup> See [Villa-García and González Rodríguez \(2020a, 2020b\)](#) for a discussion on the properties of this functional space.

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